



Redeemer Lutheran Church

# Crossroads

December 2023

## *Christmas Schedule*

### **Mid Week Advent Worship**

7:00pm

December 6, 13, 20

On site and online

### **Fourth Sunday in Advent**

December 24

10:00am

Including the changing of the paraments as part of worship

### **Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion and Candlelight**

7:00pm

On site and online



### **What Happens When Christmas Eve Is on a Sunday?**

This year presents a unique problem with Christmas Eve occurring on a Sunday. Technically, it's the Fourth Sunday in Advent that morning and Christmas Eve that evening.

Redeemer will observe both with a meditative service of prayer with communion in the morning. This service will feature changing the Advent paraments to the Christmas paraments as part of worship, and the church will already be decorated for Christmas Eve.

Then join us for Christmas Eve that evening at 7:00pm with Candlelight and Communion.

### **Why Is there No Mid-Day Quiet Communion?**

There are some significant days in the Church Year that feature worship occurs during the evening and feature Holy Communion. However, there are some who have difficulty getting out on the roads at night or who have other family obligations at the time of the worship. So, Mid-Day Quiet Communion is a simple worship (with no music – that's why it's called "Quiet"). However, this year, with Christmas Eve on a Sunday, there is a morning service with communion, so communion will be available at that time.

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Once there was a young boy who was bitterly disappointed at not being cast as Joseph in the church Christmas pageant. Instead, he was given the relatively minor role of the innkeeper. Throughout the weeks of rehearsal, he tried to think of how he might avenge himself on the boy who was Joseph. On the night of the performance, Joseph and Mary made their entrance and knocked on the door of the inn. The innkeeper cracked the door and eyed them coldly. "Can you give us board and lodging for the night?" pleaded Joseph, who then stepped back awaiting the expected rebuff. But the innkeeper had not pondered all those weeks for nothing. Flinging the door wide, he beamed and bright smile and cried, "Come in, Come in! You shall have the best room in the hotel!" There was a pause, and then with great presence of mind, the youthful Joseph said to Mary, "Hold on. I'll take a look inside first." He peered past the innkeeper, shook his head firmly and announced, "I'm not taking my wife into a place like that. Come on, Mary, we'll sleep in the stable." And the plot was back on course.

That joke makes us laugh, and oh, how full of laughter and joy Mary must have been to be part of God's plot — to know that the course of God's plan would run through her. Oh, how full of laughter and joy she must have been to know that she was the handmaid of God. This child...this child would be God's own Son! God made flesh; God one of us. In her was growing the fulfillment of all hopes and dreams for all peoples. In her was growing the longed for, long awaited Messiah of God. In her, of all women, God was doing what God had promised. I'm sure she thought back to Sarah, Abraham's wife, and how when God told Abraham that Sarah would have a child in her extreme old age, and that a multitude would descend from them — how Sarah laughed — laughed at the unbelievableness of it — laughed because she did believe — laughed at what God was doing in her. And I'm sure



Mary felt just the same. There were plenty of things to be serious about or afraid about or to wonder about as well. What does it all mean? How could all this happen? And most of all, why her? But when it came right down to it, she had to laugh. God's plot was underway in her. What more can the heart that is touched by God do but dance? What more could she

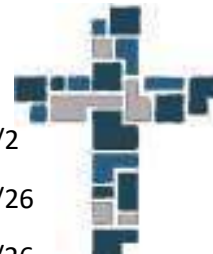
feel but joy?

One more story: this one about a little girl who was helping her mother wrap Christmas presents and who asked her mother why Jesus didn't get presents if it was his birthday. The mother explained that exchanging gifts was the way people showed love for each other because God so loves us. Then the matter was dropped. On Christmas Eve, the little girl brought a little box all wrapped up in pretty paper and put it under the tree. "What's in the box?" her mother asked. "A gift for Jesus," the girl replied. "He can open it tonight while I'm asleep." The mother didn't want her daughter disappointed, so later that night she opened the box. There was nothing in it. The next morning, the girl ran out to the tree. "Mama!" she shouted, "Jesus opened his present last night!" The mystified mother asked, "What did you give him?" And the little girl explained, "I figure Jesus has everything he needs, and I can't give him much because I'm just a little girl. But there is one thing I can give him. So I gave him a box of love."



You know, that's just what Jesus wants from us too. In that young woman, Mary, God is giving us an incredible gift. It's something so new, so miraculous, so saving, so unexpected, so full of grace, that all we can do is laugh. In that young woman, Mary, there is a gift that fulfills all our hopes and dreams, a gift that makes us new, a gift of overwhelming love. God is with us, and his name is Jesus. What more can we do but be filled with joy? What more can we do than to give our love back? What more can we do than laugh at the wonder of it all?

Ponder. Laugh. Be filled with joy. In this child, God gives us love.



## December Birthdays:

Nancy Metz	12/1
Ashley Ferri	12/4
Stephen Summer	12/4
Douglas Bernhardt	12/6
Richard Lagroon	12/6
Jayson Audette	12/7
Jason Martin	12/9
Doris Hawkins	12/10
Gerald Huckaby	12/10
Glenn McGuffin	12/13
Lyle Campbell	12/15
Errol Stutts	12/15
Gary Byrd	12/17



Dianne Shealy	12/17
Elliott Himel	12/18
Wesley Cowan	12/20
Dorothy Pappas	12/21
Sandra Moore	12/24

Carole Jaeger	12/2
Pat Blackwell	12/26
Laurah Shealy	12/26
Charlotte Audette	12/27
Jean Cook	12/27
Jase Martin	12/27
Carol Valovcin	12/27
Rebecca Epting	12/28
Kelly Mitchell	12/29
Alan Schultz	12/29
Lindsay Small	12/29
Janis Baker	12/31

## In Appreciation

Each month the Church Council recognizes and thanks those among us who have offered themselves to the work of the church in special ways. This month the council appreciated:

Our **Altar Guild** who needed to change the paraments five times in six weeks, and who will spearhead decorating our sanctuary for Christmas,

The **Property Action Team** which has been assessing the needs of the property God has entrusted to us, prioritizing them, and beginning to take action for needed repairs,

And to **Martha Summer, Stephanie Cowan, and Holly May** who have prepared lunch for our confirmation students to eat between worship and the class.



Dear Redeemer Friends,

Thank you so much for the cards, calls. Prayers and your memorial donation to Redeemer.

We deeply appreciate your kindness.

With Love in Christ,

The Neel Family,

Anne, Nan and Harold B.





## Mid-Week Advent: Comfort and Hope

Broken people in a broken world: no wonder we need God to send us a savior. This year's mid-week Advent worship services will center on the first few verses found in Isaiah 40. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah are called the Book of Judgment as Isaiah points out how the people have forsaken God and the disastrous results of our brokenness. Then, beginning in chapter 40 through the rest of the book, Isaiah offers comfort and hope to this broken people. This Book of Comfort speaks of God's steadfast love for us and the savior God will send to us.



### Advent Offerings to Purchase

#### Good Gifts

As God's people, we are concerned about our neighbors near and far. We currently have ministries reaching to neighbors near, and this Advent we will have the opportunity to share love



Give something **unexpected** this Christmas.

with those far from us as well. This year, the offerings received at the Wednesday Advent services will go to the ELCA Good Gifts program. See

page 9 for a fuller description of the Good Gifts program, but we will provide much needed things like goats, pigs, chickens, school books, mosquito nets and more to those who need them. Please give generously.

We will let you know after Advent just what we were able to provide.

### Year-End Giving Reminder

For those of you who plan to make year-end gifts, those must be received by the church office or post-marked no later than December 31, 2023. Redeemer's contribution statements will be mailed near the end of January. To ensure the deductibility of your contributions, be sure you have received your statement prior to filing your 2023 tax returns.



### Help Needed with

#### Family Promise Basketball Camp

As mentioned in last month's article Redeemer has been assigned January as our month to partners with Seven Oaks Pres and Ashland UMC to host an event for Family & Tomorrow's Promise, Seven Oaks Pres will be hosting the event and it will be a basketball camp for children ages Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade for up to 100 youth.

White Knoll's basketball coach attends Seven Oaks Pres and he and his basketball team will be on hand to facilitate the camp, provide instruction and equipment, certificates of participation, etc. our ask is to provide lunch and a few adults to provide oversight and help with lunch set-up and clean up. The director from Family Promise

is speaking to the team and leadership classes prior to the event so that they have insight and know Family Promise / Tomorrows Promise mission and understand what a wonderful opportunity they are providing. Camp date is Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. More information to come, please contact Michelle Knight or Shannon Smith with questions.





I'll be the first to admit that singing unfamiliar music is quite a challenge. It's a challenge for everyone, even those who are musicians and can read music.

Part of the problem is that if you're struggling with a new (and sometimes awkward) melody, you can't even think about the words.

In fact, sometimes in choir practice we'll just sing the notes on a "la" or "doo" or some other "neutral syllable." That way we can focus on one thing at a time.

So for a few minutes, I'd like us to do the opposite: focus on the words of two new and thought-provoking Advent hymns. One appears in ELW; the other in our new supplement "All Creation Sings."

Take a few minutes to read and contemplate these somewhat mystic texts.

"Each Winter As the Year Grows Older"

Text by William Gay

ELW 252



**Each winter as the year grows older, we each grow older, too.**

**The chill sets in a little colder; the verities we knew seem shaken and untrue.**

Maybe you see yourself in this; maybe you don't. But for those of us who struggle with faith and being faithful, this text rings uncomfortably true. As we look around at a very bleak and broken world the light of Christ seems dim, indeed. We question those "truths" that we've been taught. Doubt grows and lingers.

***When race and class cry out for treason, when sirens call for war,  
They over-shout the voice of reason and scream till we ignore all we held dear before.***

As 2023 comes to an end we witness the brutality of war, the destruction of violence, the devastation of hatred. With on-going wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and other places around the world, this text rings uncomfortably true. It seems the voices of hatred and violence are the only voices we hear.

***Yet I believe beyond believing that life can spring from death,  
That growth can flower from our grieving, that we can catch our breath and turn transfixed by faith.***

In this season of Advent—that season of waiting and preparing—we can slow down and spiritually catch our breaths; to remember that we don't have to have it all figured out; that doubt is just the other side of faith; that God's Spirit still comforts the brokenhearted and heals the struggling soul.

***So even as the sun is turning to journey to the north,  
The living flame in secret burning, can kindle on the earth and bring God's love to birth.***

The sun journeys again from its winter solstice apogee, hanging in its southern-most horizon to follow its northern trek bringing a new Spring and a new zenith in its vernal apex. Even in the lowest position of the sun is the promise that it will journey to the north and bring warmth and brightness. Likewise, God's Spirit dwelling in the secret places of our hearts will transform us, shine on us, and enable us to love and to be loved.

***O Child of ecstasy and sorrows, O Prince of peace and pain,  
Brighten today's world by tomorrow's, renew our lives again; Lord Jesus, come and reign!***



The other song is less transcendental; more straight-forward, I think. But it's good to take a moment to savor the text by itself.

*"Now the Heavens Start to Whisper"*

Text by Mary Louise Bringle

In *All Creation Sings* #901

*Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.  
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within;  
See of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!  
Like the soil beneath the frostline, hearts grow soft to welcome him.*



*Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.  
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.  
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.  
Heaven's ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.*

*Christ, eternal Sun of justice, Christ, the rose of wisdom's seed,  
Come to bless with fire and fragrance hours of yearning, hurt, and need.  
In the lonely, in the stranger, in the outcast, hid from view;  
Child who comes to grace the manger, teach our hearts of welcome you.*

## Redeemer Provides Sixteen Thanksgiving Boxes



Thanks to your generosity Redeemer provided 16 Thanksgiving turkey dinners to Seven Oaks Elementary School families. We are now collecting for Christmas dinner boxes, if you'd like to sponsor a whole meal the price is \$55.00 per family. Any donations amounts are accepted, please mark them Christmas meals and put in the offering plate, mail or drop off to Betty in the office. We are also collecting those recycled fabric type shopping bags to deliver the meals to Seven Oaks, please place on the counter/island in the fellowship kitchen. Michelle Knight can answer any questions. Thank you for your support.

## Leisure Timers Christmas Luncheon

The Leisure Timers love to celebrate the "reason for the season!" We will have our Christmas catered luncheon on Thursday, December 21st at 12:00. Two of our



favorite musicians, Jim Boatwright and Lois McLeod will share their gift of Christmas Music with us! I can't guarantee that the piano will walk again, but you'll sure think that it did! Mark your calendars so you'll be ready to sign up! Watch for details! You don't want to miss

this event! Questions, contact Connie Davis, [conniedavis@sc.rr.com](mailto:conniedavis@sc.rr.com) or call/text (803)317-7631.





## Giving Tree How To's

It's time for our 2023 Giving Tree. We are again helping children from Sharing God's Love families with Christmas gifts. Here are various ways you may help:

1. Sign up for a gift on Sign Up Genius and bring the gift-wrapped package to Redeemer by Sunday, December 10. Don't forget to put the gift code on the package. <https://relu.link/GivingTree>

**The  
Giving  
Tree**  
Helping Those  
in Need



2. Shop online for your gift and have the package delivered to Redeemer. We will wrap the gift for you. Let us know that the package is coming and the gift code.

3. Make a donation for a \$50 WalMart gift card that each family will receive.

We are blessed at Redeemer for all of the participation in the Giving Tree and many other projects that help people in our community.

Any questions--Talk to Pastor Amanda or Becky Lass (803-240-8883)

## Guest Preacher Jesse Caniff-Kuhn, Pastor at Gamecock Lutheran

On Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> we have another guest preacher joining us. That morning the Rev. Jesse Canniff-Kuhn will preach and worship with us. He has served as the Pastor at Gamecock Lutheran for 3 years now.

We asked Pastor Jesse about his favorite parts of working with young adults. "One is getting to be a part of their 'lightbulb moments.' So much of college life is having your

world expanded, and I love engaging in conversations with students about faith and scripture and theology and see their eyes light up as they uncover new ideas and perspectives and learnings. My other favorite part is seeing the way these people care for each other, support each other, advocate for each other, and embrace each other's the full and authentic selves. This generation loves so well, and it's a joy and honor to be around them. They fill me with hope."



Part of the fun of working with young people is the random conversations you get to have. If you could have a lifetime supply of anything, what would it be? "My first thought is something like "energy." I love all the roles in my life, but being a pastor and parent and husband and friend and community member can be a lot sometimes, and the idea of being a perpetual Energizer Bunny that never runs out of energy for all the things is pretty attractive. But, to give a more tangible answer, I'd also say a lifetime supply of Cheez-Its would be pretty great."

## Council Hears Update about New Sign

In November, the Council heard with excitement that the permit for our new sign has been approved, and there is a chance that the sign might be installed soon. It's possible the sign could be installed before Christmas, but Council is making sure that installation won't present a problem for our Christmas Eve worship service.

Council also discussed the Annual Congregational meeting which had been held after worship that morning. We heard positive things about the meal and our time together afterwards.

Reports were given by Pastor Gary, Pastor Amanda, and treasurer Todd Anderson. In the Pastor's Point devotional, Pastor Gary invited the Council members to reflect of the blessings our congregation received this year for which we can be thankful.

Steve Summer updated the Council on some activities of the Property Action Team and that he had heard about more needs after the congregational meeting.

Council also received the financial policies and procedures that are in place as they consider an outside finan-

cial review in the new year.

Family Promise has requested a special collection on a Sunday in January to help fund its program, and the Council set January 14 as the date for that collection.

Pastor Gary shared plans that have been developed for relandscaping the front of the church along with a bid to do it. Council has not yet acted on this proposal.

Offerings at our mid-week Advent worship services will be given to ELCA Good Gifts which provides farm animals, community development, education, and much more to third-world countries. Once the monies are collected, the staff will determine how to allocate it.



- New Sign could be installed soon
- Property Action Team tells about repairs
- Council prepares for financial review
- Family Promise collection January 14
- Relandscaping front of church under consideration
- Advent Offerings to Good Gifts
- New pastor Pictures on the way

## By the Numbers

### October

	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Total income	\$418,359	\$390,561	\$439,760
Total expenses	\$431,674	\$4485,865	\$499,078
Income less expense	(\$13,315)	(\$95,304)	(\$59,318)
Balance on mortgage loan	\$-	\$-	\$21,012
Unrestricted Cash Balance	\$184,132	\$89,823	\$153,062
Attendance	183	179	180





Pastor Gary and I had a good laugh. As I stood in the doorway to his office he told me about editing the Go and Serve that is part of our weekly bulletin. Under the section that lists the dates for Youth, Family, and Community events appeared an announcement for the Community Easter Egg Extravaganza! Pastor Gary mentioned his curiosity as to how long that announcement had been in the Go and Serve. Had it been in there since

last spring?!?! I smiled and told him that I put the announcement in at the beginning of November. After the Community Trunk or Treat, I wanted folks to be able to mark their calendar for the next big community event. The announcement was talking about the egg hunt coming in the next spring!

We both had a good chuckle. He thought I was running 6 months behind. Strangely I was thinking 6 months ahead. It was the Easter Egg Extravaganza that was already, but still not yet. I've talked about the "already, but not yet" in sermons, Bible studies, and other articles. This particular time of year gets me thinking in those terms. We are in a season of preparation. Preparing for Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Yet this birth happened over two millennia ago. As we move through Advent, let's prepare for the coming of Christ. At the same time, let us all remember that Christ has come. Christ has called us to be the hands and feet of God in the world. As Martin Luther reminded us, we are to be "Little Christ's" to one another, bound in community through love, grace, and mercy. Have a blessed Advent.

### The Gift for The Person Who Has Everything

Looking for the gift to give that keeps on giving? Have you thought about ELCA Good Gifts? The ELCA Good Gifts program is an incredible way to honor someone while making a difference in our world!



ELCA Good Gifts has an assortment of gifts that can be given in memory or in honor of someone. These gifts are used both domestically, for projects here in the United States, and globally in nearly 90 countries. As

Lutherans we believe that God is calling us into the world, and the Good Gifts program gives us an avenue to do this and to make a difference in communities around the world.

Throughout Advent, there will be Good Gifts Catalogues in the narthex or see Pastor Gary or Pastor Amanda for help. You can also find the catalogue online. If you have any questions about the gifts, their use, or ELCA World Hunger, don't hesitate to ask. And don't forget, when someone asks you for your Christmas wish list think about putting ELCA Good Gifts on your list!

### If You are 70½ or Older....

then you may have an opportunity to support our church in a powerful way. If you have an IRA, once you reach the age of 70 and a half, you must make mandatory withdrawals which become taxable income to



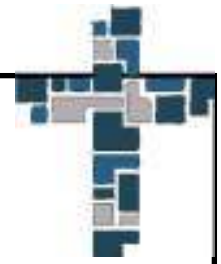
you. However, there is a way to make contributions from your IRA directly to the church without it becoming taxable income. Want to know more? Contact Yvonne Krouse at the church office for all the "how to's."

### Thursday Bible Study on Break



The Thursday Bible Study has finished its study of Psalms and is on break until January 4. Watch for information about the new topic to begin then.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian 2pm - Book Study @ Zoom	27 10am - Staff Meeting @ front	28	29 6pm - Choir Practice 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	30 6pm - NAMI support group @	1 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	2 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian
3 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 11:15am - Worship & Music @ 11:30am - Confirmation @ 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	4 10am - Staff Meeting @ front	5	6 6pm - Choir Practice 7pm - Mid-Week Advent Worship 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	7 6pm - NAMI support group @	8 9am - Private Event @ Fellowship 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	9 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian
10 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 11:30am - Church Council @ large 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	11 10am - Staff Meeting @ front 2pm - Ruth Circle @ back	12	13 6pm - Choir Practice 7pm - Mid-Week Advent Worship 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	14	15 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	16 9:30am - Brass Practice @ 10:30am - Adult Choir @ 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian
17 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian 6pm - Campfire and Carols @	18 10am - Staff Meeting @ front	19	20 6pm - Choir Practice 7pm - Mid-Week Advent Worship 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	21 12pm - Leisure Time @ 6pm - NAMI support group @	22 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	23
24 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian 7pm - Christmas Eve Worship	25 Agape Myanmar Christian Church	26	27 6pm - Choir Practice 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	28 6pm - NAMI support group @	29 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	30 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian
31 8:45am - Faith Launch/Adult 9:30am - Choir practice 10am - Worship 2pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	1 10am - Staff Meeting @ front	2	3 6pm - Choir Practice 7:30pm - Handbell Choir @	4 10am - Thursday Bible Study @ 6pm - NAMI support group @ 7pm - Thursday Bible Study @	5 6pm - Agape Myanmar Christian	6



## Calendar

Always subject to change!

Fri/Sat, Dec 1-2  
 HS Youth Lockin  
 9th-12th, 7:00 pm—10:00 am

Sun, December 3, 2023  
 OK Youth Group, Littles-K (and parents)  
 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Sun, December 3, 2023  
 Elementary Youth Group, 1st-6th  
 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Sun, December 3, 2023  
 Confirmation Class, 7th-11th  
 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Fri/Sat, TBD  
 MS Youth Lockin  
 6th-8th, 7:00 pm—10:00 am

Sun, January 7, 2023  
 OK Youth Group, Littles-K (and parents)  
 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Sun, January 7, 2023  
 Elementary Youth Group, 1st-6th  
 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Sun, January 7, 2023  
 Confirmation Class, 7th-11th  
 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

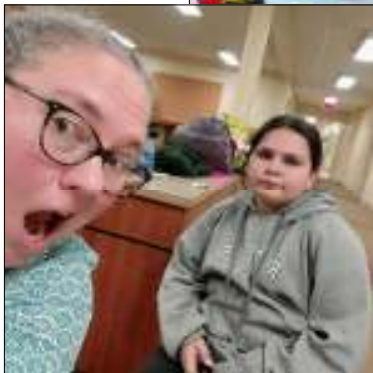
February 9-11, 2024  
 2024 SCLCY Winter Retreat, 6th-12th

Sun, February 11, 2024  
 MS Superbowl Party, Time TBD  
 HS Superbowl Party, Time TBD

Sat, March 23, 2024  
 Community Easter Egg Hunt  
 Everyone's invited, 10:00 - 11:30 am

Sun, May 19, 2024  
 Rite of Confirmation during Worship

July 15-21, 2024  
 ELCA Youth Gathering  
 Current 8th-12th Grades  
 New Orleans, LA





**Redeemer Lutheran Church**

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Yvonne Krouse, Parish Financial  
Administrator  
ykrouse@relu.church  
Jim Boatwright, Director of Music  
jboat@relu.church  
Betty Pearce parish Secretary  
bpearce@relu.church

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**Sunday Services**

8:45 a.m. Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

**2023 Congregation  
Council Members**

Term Expires End of 2023  
Carroll Lorick  
Steve Summer  
Julie Crooks

**Executive Committee**

President	Bill Newmyer
Vice President	Steve Summer
Treasurer	Todd Anderson
Secretary	Kai Jørgensen

Term Expires End of 2024  
Bill Newmyer  
Carol Valovcin  
Linda Wells

Term Expires End of 2025  
Kai Jørgensen  
Fauni Lowe  
Mike Parker

**Online Giving**

Scan this symbol with  
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